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MINISTER PRENTICE CONFIRMS MEASURES TAKEN TO ENSURE INTERIM STABILITY AT THE OFFICE OF THE TREATY COMMISSIONER

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OTTAWA (April 13, 2007) - The Honourable Jim Prentice, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians today announced that action is being taken to ensure interim stability at the Office of the Treaty Commissioner (OTC) in Saskatchewan.

The term of the current Commissioner and the current mandate of the Commission ended on March 31, 2007. The Minister has directed departmental officials to continue discussions with the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) about renewing the Commission's mandate over the long term. The goal is to accomplish this work as quickly as possible.

In the meantime, several steps have been taken to maintain the administrative functions of the Office of the Treaty Commissioner (OTC) while Canada's New Government continues the process of seeking approval for the extension of the office. These include:

- former Executive Director, Ken Horsman, has been hired as the interim caretaker for the OTC, to ensure that after-year-end legal and financial obligations are met;
- interim funding is being provided by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada so that this work can be done;
- joint work is ongoing with the FSIN to identify a final candidate for appointment as the next Commissioner.

"The FSIN has recommended a candidate for the job," said Minister Prentice. "I am considering the recommendation and expect to move quickly."

"We are pleased that the interim arrangements, planned jointly with the FSIN, have been put in place," stated Chief Lawrence Joseph. "These steps will ensure a smooth transition, while work continues on the selection of a new commissioner and the renewal of the OTC's mandate."

Since 1989, the Office of the Treaty Commissioner has been instrumental in facilitating discussions on and raising public awareness of the importance of historic treaties in Saskatchewan. Both Canada and the FSIN are committed to seeing this work continue.

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